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MARCH 1984

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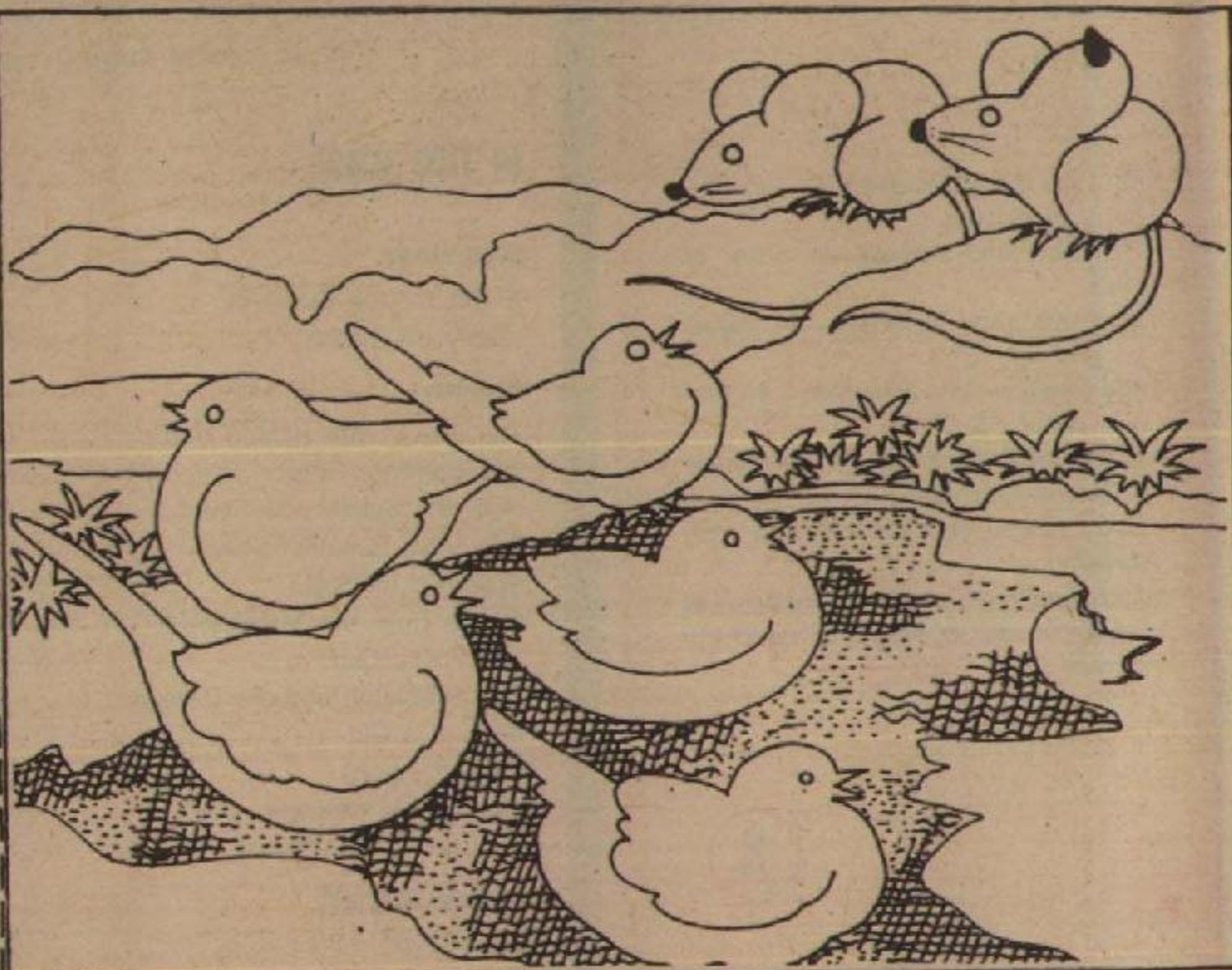
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MARCH 1984

CHANDAMAMA [English]

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NEXT ISSUE

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- * *Transition and Turmoil—in Story of India*
- * *Monkeys and Gardeners—An Indian Legend*
- * *The Over-cautions Merchant—An Arabian Night Story*
- * *The Fateful Prophecy—in the feature Unsolved Mysteries*
- * *Two Letters—Towards a Brighter Personality*
- * *And all the features like Newsflash, Let Us Know and a bunch of delightful stories!*



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AND Newsflash, Contests, Let Us Know and More!



A VOTE FOR LAUGHTER

An expert has said that smile and laughter are so good for health that if one does not have any reason to smile or laugh, one should still force oneself to smile and laugh—or pretend to do so. Even that would serve much purpose!

Smiles and laughter are always good except when there is venom in them, that is to say, when one smiles or laughs with cruelty or some sense of revenge. In such cases one might outwardly feel happy, but inwardly one loses his peace and serenity.

So there is nothing like our ability to laugh innocently, to laugh at funny happenings around us.

And surely you will agree that your magazine is not making any tall claim when it says that it is making its humble contribution towards cultivating that ability in its readers!

CHANDAMAMA CONTEST

The result of the contest held in January will be published in our next issue.

GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

यथैव बिम्बं मृदयोपलिप्तं तेजोमयं भ्राजते तत्सुधान्तम् ।
तद्वात्मतत्त्वं प्रसमीक्ष्य देही एकः कृतार्थो भवते वीतशोकः ॥

Yathaiiva bimbaṁ mṛdayopaliptaṁ tejomayaṁ bhrājate tatsudhāntam

Tadvātmatattvaṁ prasamīkṣya dehī ekaḥ kṛtārtho bhavate vītaśokaḥ

Just as a mirror covered by dust shines bright when cleaned, an enlightened being becomes free from all sorrows once he has known his true self.

— *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Pramod Bhanushali,



Smt. V. Rajamani

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for January '84:—

Sujata Swaminatha, C/o Mr. M. Swaminatha,
001, Sea-Side Apts, Prabhadevi Beach, Bombay-400 025.

The Winning Entry:—"Welcome Voice" & "Deafening Noise"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

"Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than in the one where they spring up."

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

"If you would learn the secrets of nature, you must practise more humanity than others."

—*Henry David Thoreau*

"In a certain sense, every single human soul has more meaning and value than the whole of history."

—*Nicholas Berdyaev*

NEWS-FLASH



Waking Pills

You know of sleeping pills—pills that put one to sleep. Now there will be waking pills—that will wake one up after some hours—according to the German research service.

Security Guards with a Difference

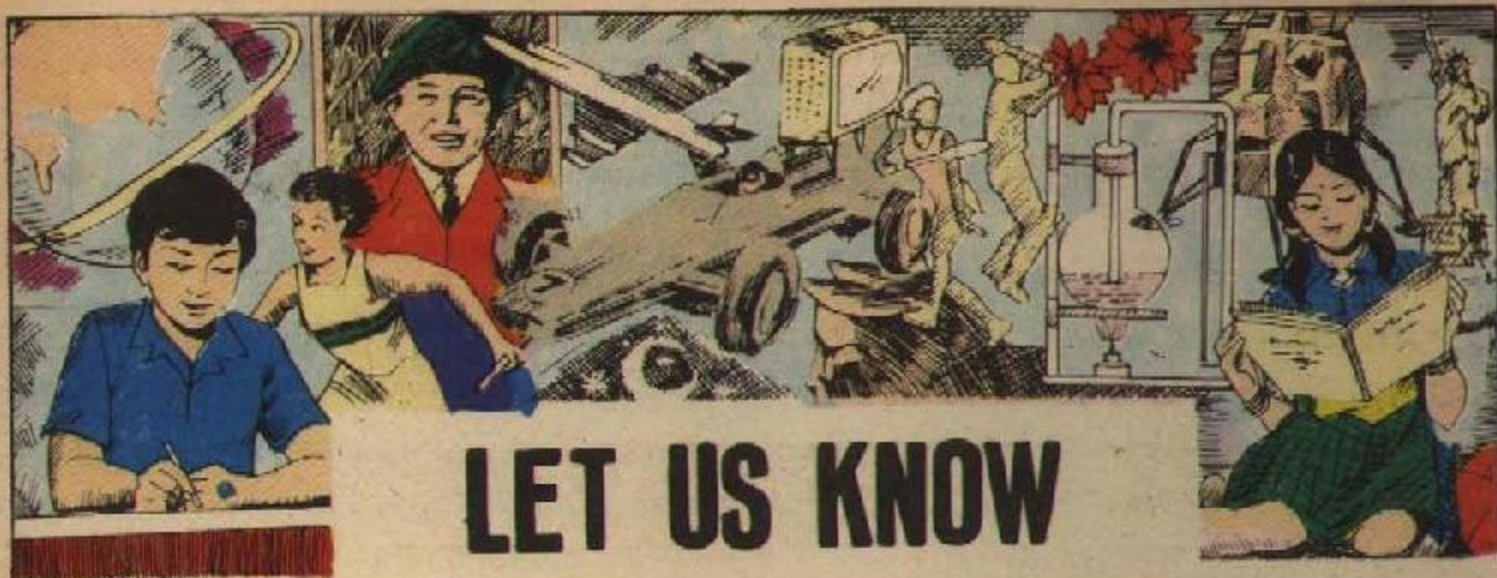
For past few years a shopkeeper in a small town near Naples managed excellently well with two novel guards—two lions. He had bought them from a circus as cubs and had treated them kindly. The lions grew up and treated him and all his customers so kindly that nobody in the locality had any reason to complain about them. At night the two lions guarded the store.

However, one night, recently, the police came there for a routine check-up of security arrangements and found the store's security rather too secure! Now the store-keeper has been ordered to transfer the lions to the zoo.



New Record

Eight women at Hesslingen, West Germany, sat on eight 2.5 metre-high poles for 122 hours, setting what they call "World pole sitting record!"



If the Story of Krishna is fascinating, the Story of India is highly educative. My question concerns the latter. Like the English East India Company, had any other western country formed a Company for trade and colonisation?

—Poornima Mazumdar, New Delhi.

Yes. The French East India Company formed in 1664. It tried in vain to colonise Madras. However, it colonised several small areas in India, the most important of them being Pondicherry. Earlier to that, there was the Dutch East India Company formed in 1602. They, however, could not make much headway.

Can we call Vyasa's Mahabharata a history? If not, which book is the first Indian history book?

—Gautam B. Reddy, Vizianagaram.

The *Mahabharata* certainly has elements of history in abundance in it, but it is much more than history; it is an epic that contains superb poetry, history, philosophy, psychology and, last but not the least, spiritual wisdom.

Generally the *Rajatarangini* by Kalhana (12th century) is considered the first work of history. It is a chronicle of the kings of Kashmir.

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.

A Gift for the Guru

Pace returned to Mathura. The good old King Ugrasen, after getting back his throne, announced that then on the sceptre will stand for justice and not for terror.

The people were never tired of collecting in groups and discussing the events of that fateful day. How could one forget one's shock at the two lovely boys

suddenly being confronted by a ferocious elephant that tried to trample them? How could one forget either the bid of the giant wrestlers to vanquish the two boys or, for that matter, the demon-king himself yelling out murder and trying to kill the unarmed child, Krishna?

Last but not the least, how could anybody forget the mar-





vellous unexpected—the mighty tyrant falling to his death with the little Krishna perched on his chest?

While all were agog with their wonder and delight, Krishna and Balarama seemed to have forgotten all about those events. They were more interested in playing with their friends from Brindavan who had followed them there than in the effect of the drama in which they figured so prominently.

But they knew that they could not go on frolicking in the fields or playing hide-and-seek forever. It was time for them to go to school.

Their father, Vosudev, consulted their priest, Garga. "In the state of Avanti, on the banks of the river Sipra, lives a great sage, Sandipani. He is as well-versed in scriptures as he is in the arts and the military science. He is the right guru to impart lessons to Krishna and Balarama," said Garga.

At an auspicious moment the two boys proceeded to the sage's Ashram, to begin a new phase of life.

The Ashram of Sage Sandipani was situated on a lovely spot, beside an evergreen forest. His students lived in small but decent huts. Works and education went together. The students themselves raised crops, gathered firewood, fruits and flowers and did all the sundry work for the Ashram. The guru studied the nature and capacity of a student and gave him lessons accordingly. He did not care whether his parents were rich or poor.

Krishna and Balarama learnt their lessons with deep concentration. Years passed and the guru was satisfied that they had completed their studies.

"My boys, you may now go home and begin doing your noble duties," Sage Sandipani

told Krishna and Balarama.

"O Guru, we know only too well that we can never pay you in any manner even for a part of what you have given us. But won't you ask something of us for our satisfaction?" asked the two brothers.

"My boys, why should I ask for anything? Myself and my wife have hardly any need. The one for whom we might have desired to have something—I mean my only son—disappeared into the sea at Prabhas twelve years ago. Only if we could get him back!" said the sage wistfully.

"Bless us, Guru, so that we can bring our lost brother back

to you!"

The two students bowed to the sage who marvelled at their courage and determination.

Before the guru had said anything further, they were gone.

On the lonely seashore at Prabhas Krishna was greeted by Varuna, the God of the waters.

"What did you do to Sage Sandipani's son?" Krishna demanded of the god.

"I have done nothing to him, though his kidnapper lives in my waters—deep in the sea. He is a marine demon called Panchajana, extremely proud of his power," said Varuna.

"Pride must have a fall." Krishna asked Balarama to wait



for him on the shore and plunged in the sea.

Innumerable creatures dwelt under the wide wide sea. Panchajana, the demon, did a lot of mischief on the land but, escaping into the sea, he assumed the form of a conch and hid amidst submerged rocks.

He slipped from the crevice of one rock to that of another to remain beyond Krishna's reach, but his efforts went in vain. When he realised that he had been found out, he grew into menacing size and attacked Krishna.

But he was certainly no stronger than the demons set against Krishna by Kamsa! One blow from Krishna cut him to size. Reduced to a handy conch, it remained in Krishna's grip. Krishna shook it and everything but the shell fell off. But no

trace of the sage's son was to be seen. The demon had obviously killed him.

With the conch-shell in hand Krishna arrived at the abode of the God of Death. He blew the conch-shell, invoking the sage's son. From the dark abode emerged his soul. Out of the elements it recovered its lost body—and there stood the boy lost to the world twelve years ago.

Krishna and Balarama were back at their guru's Ashram with the unexpected gift. The sage was delighted and his wife wept with joy. The couple blessed Krishna and Balarama from the core of their hearts.

Krishna never forsook the conch-shell—the memory of the demon he had vanquished. It became famous as Panchajanya, after the demon's name.



THE JACKAL WITH HIDDEN HORNS

On a hill lived a flying squirrel who had five little children.

A little jackal saw them. Little he was in size, but he was as wicked as wicked could be.

"Hey squirrel, give me one of your little ones," he ordered the mother squirrel.

"How can I do that?" asked the squirrel, quite shocked.

"Never mind. I know how to take it." The jackal advanced towards the squirrel's nest.

"Stop!" shouted the mother

squirrel.

"Beware of my horns! They are not visible, true, but the moment-I wish they will pop up on my head!"

The squirrel got scared. The jackal took hold of one of her kids and went away.

Next day he did the same.

He did the same the day after too.

On the fourth day the mother squirrel kept weeping right from the dawn.



"What's your sorrow, child?" asked a grand old eagle who had just settled down in a tree.

The squirrel told him of the jackal's behaviour. "Don't you worry any longer. I'll take charge of the situation," said the eagle.

A little later the gleeful jackal was seen slowly advancing towards the squirrel.

"Hello jackal, I am just dying to see your hidden horns. Where are they, please?"

The jackal looked up and saw the huge eagle flapping his wings.

"Um, um....." The jackal came out with no words.

"A wonderful jackal like you deserves a high treatment," said the eagle and he swooped down upon the jackal and flew away, holding him in his claws.

The jackal howled and screamed, and as the eagle flew higher and higher, he grew too frightened to open his mouth.

The eagle flew over the sea and dropped the jackal into the waters most unceremoniously. With a splash the little jackal fell on the blue waters and struggled to remain afloat.

"What's a jackal doing here?" asked a seal.

"What else," said the jackal, climbing to its back at once.



"I'm commissioned by the authorities to count the number of seals between this spot and the shore."

"That's rather a good thing to hear, for we seals had no idea that the authorities really bothered about us!" said the seal and he at once whistled. A hundred seals floated up between him and the shore. The jackal began counting, "One, two, three...." And as he did so, he jumped from the back of one seal to the other and soon he was on the shore, quite safe.

"Ha, ha ha!" he laughed and laughed. "You stupid seals! Why on earth should anybody bother about you except when you serve some purpose? Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

He laughed and laughed till the seals understood what he meant to say.

"Why do you say we are stupid? Our friend whistled and we floated up. We hardly knew what you were doing! And if you could save yourself by jumping on us, should you not feel grateful to us?" asked the seal nearest to the shore.

"Fools, fools!" said the jackal and he stood on his hind legs and clapped his forelegs. The fact is, his easy escape had overjoyed him.

"A creature so wise should rise high!" said the eagle who was observing the situation. The jackal fell silent at once. The eagle swooped down upon him once again and carried him high and threw him down into the sea.

No seal took any interest in him any more.

A Negidal Fairytale, retold by Vindusar.



THE COMMON TRAIT

Rakesh borrowed a hundred rupees from Sundaram, but did not pay back the amount. A long time passed. Of course, they met from time to time. Sundaram was sure that Rakesh had forgotten about the loan.

"Rakesh, whenever I see you I remember Jayant. He is as smart and charming as you are," one day Sundaram observed.

"Is that so?" asked a flattered Rakesh.

"Yes. And his memory is also as sound as yours."

"Thanks."

"Not only that, his voice too is as impressive and sweet as your voice," said Sundaram, as if trying to remember the resemblances one after another.

"Is there any other similarity between us?" asked Rakesh who was surely growing more and more pleased.

"Of course he is as tall as you are—and as well-dressed, but I just forget another factor of similarity between you" Sundaram sounded thoughtful.

"Please try to recollect!"

"Oh yes, I remember now. He too owes me a hundred rupees!"



MOBY-DICK

(Ishmael has decided to go whaling. He signs on with a half-mad captain, named Ahab, whose only aim in life is to destroy the white whale, Moby Dick, which has been responsible for his loss of a leg.)

From where I had taken my place in the rigging, I could see quite clearly the whale some mile or so ahead. It seemed to me a monstrous whale, far larger than any other I had seen before.



Soon the boats were dropped and the oars, plying with rippling swiftness, shot us all to leeward, with Ahab in the leading boat.

Moby Dick moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of his trunk, and entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw. Then suddenly when we were near him, his whole body rose from the water.



Waving his mighty flukes, Moby Dick plunged out of sight. "Gone!" said Ahab, standing rooted in the boat's prow. We were to see Moby Dick again that day. With malicious intent, it came up under Ahab's boat in the manner of a biting shark and then took the front of the boat full within its mouth. Then, in this attitude, it shook the boat like a cruel cat shaking a mouse.

Withdrawing from its prey, Moby Dick let the boat drop from its jaws, and then made off, leaving Ahab and his crew still struggling in the water.





Ahab and his crew were dragged into one of the other boats and we all made our way back to the Pequod. "My harpoon," Ahab said suddenly, when we were aboard. "Is it safe?" "Aye, sir," said one of the seamen, presenting it to him. "Good," Ahab said. "Then set the sail and prepare the boats again to follow Moby Dick once more. To Hell, if necessary!"

For a day and a night, and then half into the next day, we continued our pursuit of the white whale. "There she breaches! There she breaches!" the cry went up at last. Looking again to the leeward, I saw the white whale tossing himself salmon-like to heaven as if openly taunting us. Once more the chase was on!"



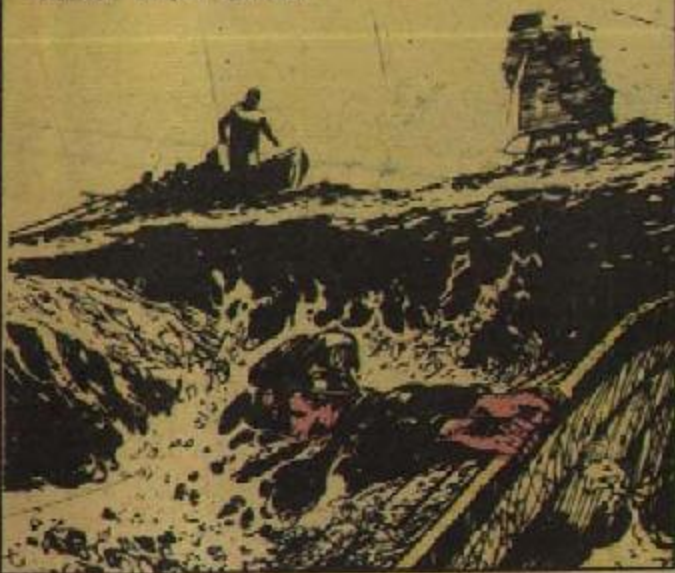
A great cry of mad joy rose to Ahab's lips. "Moby Dick," Ahab shouted across the waters, "This time your harpoon and your hour are truly at hand." The boats were lowered immediately.

As soon as we were all in the water Moby Dick headed towards us as if to strike terror into us and thus render us helpless with fear. Churning himself into a furious speed, the whale rushed among the boats, heedless of the irons that darted into him.

Acting with truly remarkable speed, Ahab pulled out his knife and slashed through our own lines. The other two boats were not so lucky. As it continued on its course, the white whale drew the other two boats towards him, and the next moment his flukes were dashing them together.



The Pequod, having seen what had happened, came bearing down to the rescue, and dropping a boat they picked up the floating mariners. In the meantime Ahab's boat had foundered and he was found clinging to a portion of it, seemingly more dead than alive.



It was Starbuck who voiced the thoughts of us all when we were safely aboard. "You will never catch him," he cried. "You have chased him twice and he has stove our boat to splinters. Must we keep hunting this murderous beast until he drags us all to the bottom of the sea?"



Ahab regarded him sombrely. "I have a high regard for you, Starbuck, but I will not be ruled from my resolution to destroy that accursed whale." He turned to us all. "I know you all for brave men. I ask you to follow me until the whale spouts his last!"

—To Continue



HOW THE HOWL WAS CURED

There was a nobleman whose greatest joy lay in appreciating nature. He loved the sights of sunrise and sunset in particular.

Once he decided to sail into the sea and enjoy the sunrise with waters all around.

He boarded his large boat long before it was dawn, in company of his friends and servants. Among the servants was a boy. Somebody dragged him into the boat while he was still

very sleepy. He fell asleep in the boat.

A charming morning was growing distinct. The nobleman and his friends stood in a serene mood waiting for the sunrise. All was quiet.

Suddenly a shriek shattered the peace. The nobleman was surprised. His servants were in a hurry to find out the source of the noise.

It was that sleepy boy. Waking up, he saw himself in a boat.



The fact that the boat was a small thing floating on that vast water terrified him. He gave out a shriek and shut his eyes. But on opening his eyes, he could not miss to see the water again. He gave out a shriek again. He kept doing so. The servants could not stop him.

The nobleman was annoyed. "Hello, doctor," he called out to his personal physician who was in his company, "Can't you cure the chap of his howls?"

"I can," answered the physician promptly, "On condition that nobody should question my method of treatment."

"Go ahead!" said the no-

bleman.

The physician lifted the boy and hurled him into the water. The boy struggled to swim but seemed to fail. The physician jumped into the water himself and caught hold of him and brought him aboard the boat.

The boy kept absolutely quiet for the rest of the time.

An hour later the nobleman and his friends were having their breakfast. Asked the amused nobleman, "Doctor, what kind of treatment was that?"

"It was the simple method of comparison, sir. Compared to the land, the boat appeared unsafe to the boy. So he gave



out shrieks. Compared to the water, he must have found the boat most safe. So he stopped shrieking," explained the physician.

Grandfather Chowdhury, who narrated the story to his grandchildren Rajesh and Reena, said in conclusion, "Rajesh, most of our inconveniences are quite imaginary. Our suffering would be much reduced only if we could change our attitude.

"Right," said Rajesh and Reena. A minute passed in silence. Suddenly Rajesh called out, "Grandpa!"

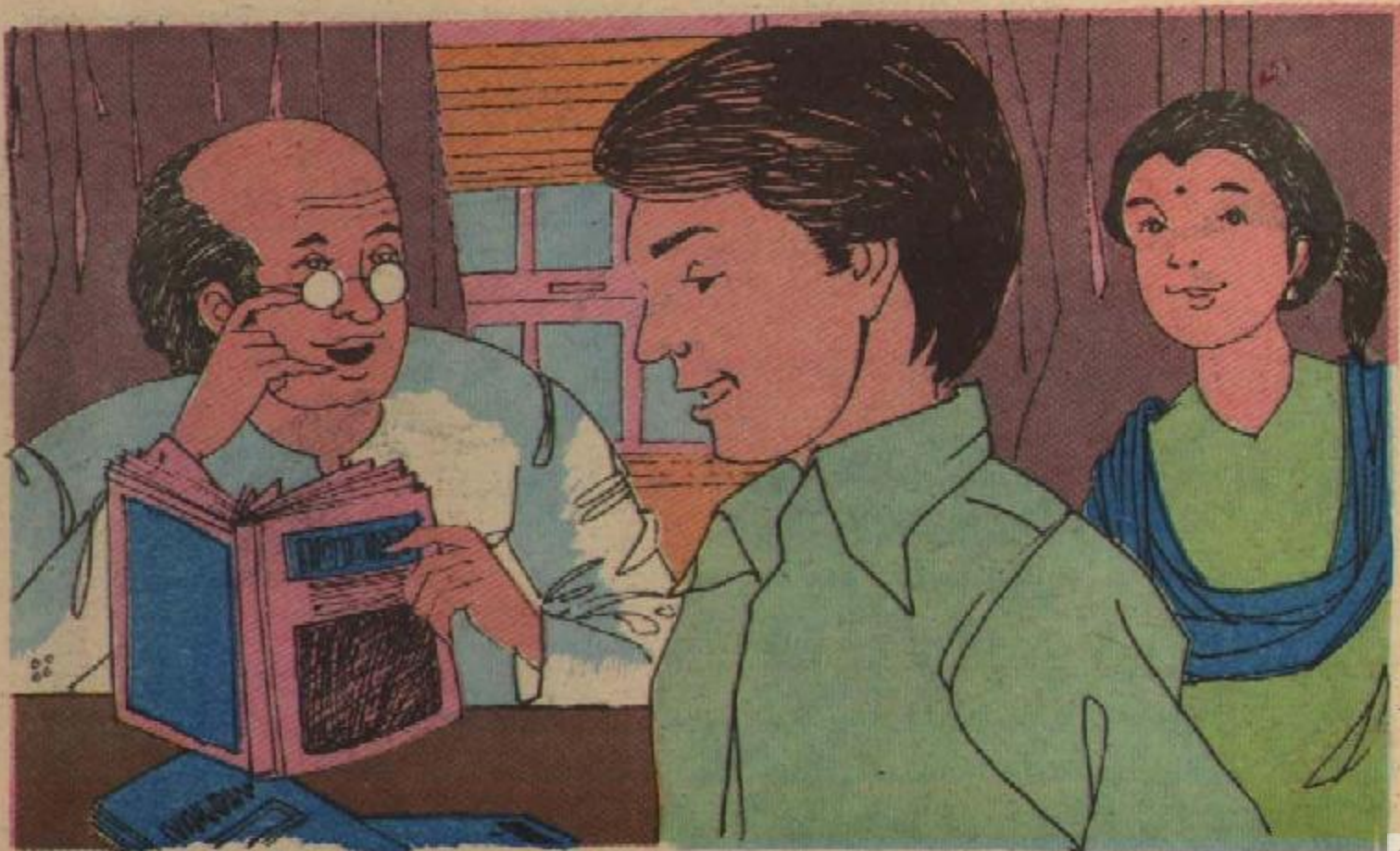
"Yes?"

"Did you by any chance overhear my complaints to Reena?"

Reena giggled at Rajesh's question.

"I did. You were sore that you could not avail of a car and had to travel by a bus. The comfort you thought you lost was quite imaginary. You should have decided to enjoy your journey by the public transport. You ought to have compared your condition with people who cannot even avail of that!"

"Right, Grandpa. It was foolish of me to be fussy about it," agreed Rajesh.



HOW THE SULTAN WAS SAVED

A prince, out for hunting, lost his way in the jungle. He wandered all alone for a long time and got extremely tired. He sprawled under a tree.

The young daughter of a forest-dweller found him and gave him food and drink and showed him the way out of the jungle.

The prince could not forget the girl. He tossed on his bed without a wink of sleep for the whole night and in the morning rode into the jungle.

He found out the girl soon. "This time you won't have to lead me out of the forest. Lead me to your father," he said to the girl, all smiles.

And soon he stood before the forest-dweller and introduced himself. The forest-dweller, a poor man, was surprised that the prince came to see him. He received the prince with humility and asked him, "How can I serve you, Your Majesty?"

"I propose to marry your daughter," said the prince.



"Will you kindly agree to my proposal?" he asked, sure that the man will jump at it.

The man was more surprised surely than before, but he looked grave. Then it was for the prince to feel surprised at his question.

"What work do you do, O Prince?" asked the man.

The prince stammered forth, "Did I not say that I am the prince—the one to succeed my father, the Sultan, to the throne?"

"That is all right, Your Majesty, but one who would marry my daughter ought to have learnt some craft. Pardon me for saying so, but the king-

dom has not been achieved by you. Today it is yours, tomorrow it may not remain with you. If you have achieved some skill in any work, you can be proud of that and can depend on that," said the man.

The prince could not appreciate the man's point of view, but he did not like to argue with him. "I'll come back in a year's time," he said and took leave of the man.

Back in his palace he summoned one of the best craftsmen in the kingdom, a master seamster. He learnt from him the art of needle-work. His concentration was deep. In a few





months he could knit excellent and intricate designs on clothes.

He practised till his trainer assured him that he had excelled all the others in the art. Then the prince rode into the forest and demonstrated his art to the girl's father. The forest-dweller was much impressed. He happily let his daughter marry the prince.

Soon the Sultan died and the prince ascended the throne.

One day he decided to see the condition of the city in disguise. He dressed like an ordinary trader and moved about in the bazars and markets.

He felt hungry. He walked

into a shop where hot food was on sale.

"You look like a traveller from another town. Instead of buying food and eating elsewhere, you may sit in our inner room and dine. We will serve you freshly cooked food, item by item," proposed one of the fellows managing the shop. They looked very hospitable.

"That should be fine," agreed the disguised Sultan.

He was led into a room—then into another behind it and then into yet another. "There, sit on the carpet," they told him.

There was a small square carpet. The Sultan stepped onto it. At once he fell into a deep underground chamber. The carpet had only hidden a hole.

He understood that he was in the hands of a gang of thugs. Soon his captors arrived through a staircase. They began to search him. He had no much money on him. The thugs were annoyed. "You see, we have to kill you in any case. It is a pity that you should yield so little!"

"Please don't kill me!" pleaded the Sultan.

"If we spare you, our having killed so many people over the years will go in vain! You will go and inform the Sultan and we

will be captured!" a member of the gang explained.

In the meanwhile two of them were examining a handkerchief they had found in the Sultan's pocket.

"How charming is this design! This may fetch us some money!" they exclaimed to their friends.

"If you let me live," said the Sultan, "I can make such designs on handkerchiefs and you can sell them at high price. What will you gain by killing me?"

"Do you mean to say that you made this design?" asked the leader of the gang.

"You can fetch me cloth and

thread and needle and see for yourselves!"

Within two hours the thugs knew that they had a master craftsman as their prisoner. They kept him under lock in another room. They brought him the necessary materials. He made beautiful handkerchiefs, covers for jars and veils and screens. The thugs sold them among the nobility and made very good profit.

A month passed. The queen, the Vizir and the courtiers were extremely worried on account of the Sultan. Where had he gone? Was he in any danger? They did not know.



One day the Sultan gave the thugs a handkerchief with the best design he had ever made. "Sell this to the Sultan," he said.

"The Sultan is not to be seen for some days now," the thugs informed him.

"In that case, try to sell this to the Sultan's Vizir," advised the Sultan.

The thugs, in high spirit, met the Vizir with the stuff. The moment the Vizir saw it, he read in it some secret signs which were known only to the Sultan and himself.

"Wait a moment. I'll show this to the queen. If she likes it, you'll receive a reward that would be far more than its price!" the Vizir said. He entered the palace.

The thugs waited with joy. Inside the palace the queen at

once recognised the needlework to be her husband's. The Vizir had no doubt left in his mind now about the nature of those sellers.

When the Vizir appeared before the thugs, he was not alone. A full dozen fearful guards were with him. The thugs were captured. One of them broke down and confessed to their crime. The royal sepoy's surrounded their camp cautiously so that the imprisoned Sultan was not harmed. Then they stormed in and captured the rest of the gang.

The Sultan was rescued.

"When my wife's father insisted that I ought to learn some craft even though I was a prince, I had taken him to be crazy. But how sound and sensible he was! My work saved my life, not my kingdom," said the Sultan.



THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SHAWL

There was a craftsman in Kashmir who did excellent floral needlework on woollen shawls. His fame spread far and wide. Noblemen, high officers of the king and even the king himself used to order shawls from him.

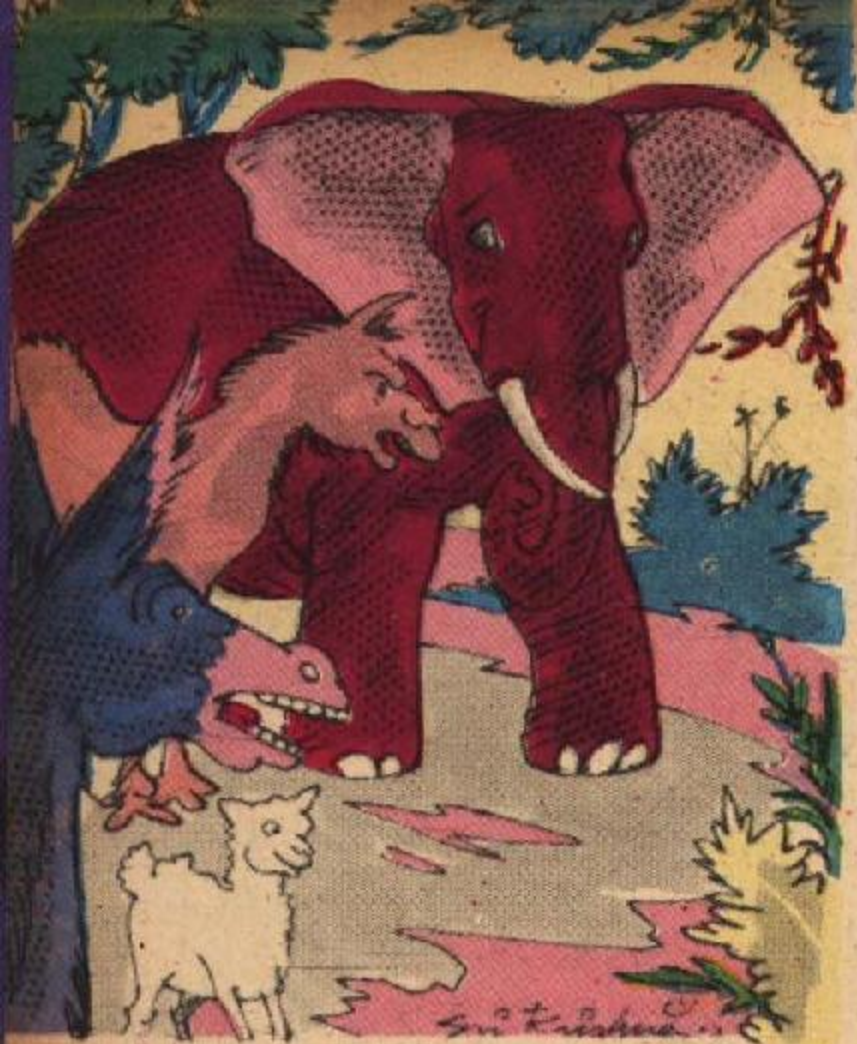
He grew old. It was seen that he was devoting some time every night to work on a shawl, after the day's hard work on other shawls. By and by that particular shawl was seen to have become most charming.

"Is he doing for some king or emperor?"—his children wondered.

Soon after the work on it was completed, the old man took to bed.

"It is time for me to die," he told his sons and daughters. "When I die, throw this shawl on my body. That is once when God will look upon me. I wish Him to see that I have not wasted my life, but have worked to the best of my skill and capacity."





SHADOWS FOR SALE

dow. "It is so refreshing!" he said.

"Hello Eleph, will you let me walk by the camy's side?" asked the donkey.

"Welcome, Donk, welcome."

The donkey went over to the camel's side.

After a while the donkey looked back and whispered to the lamb, "You fool, why don't you come over to my shadow? Of course, I'll not charge you more than a paisa."

Although the donkey had said this in a low voice, the camel could hear it, nevertheless. He looked askance at the donkey. The donkey did not seem to be sorry.

"Shut up, Donk! You ought to remember that you are walking in my shadow!" claimed the camel. "I should expect four paise from you since you're going into business."

"You fools. Aren't you all walking in my shadow? Who allowed you to trade in my shadow without first telling me how much you propose to pay me?" asked the elephant and he

From the forest in the East to the forest in the West the road was long.

But it was summer and the forest in the East had caught fire. The elephant, the camel, the donkey and the lamb were heading towards the forest in the West.

The sun was overhead. The breeze was terribly hot. Except the elephant all were feeling like swooning away.

"Hello Eleph, can I walk by your side, in your shadow?" asked the camel.

"By all means!" said the elephant. The camel advanced to walk in the elephant's sha-



broke away from them and crossed over to the other side of the road.

"And why should I spend my shadow on you?" the camel asked the donkey and he moved away.

"Neither am I going to give my shadow to you," the donkey informed the lamb.

"Even if you oblige me with your shadow, Donk, I can't pay you, simply because I don't have any money with me. And, may I remind you, none of you have any money either!" said the lamb.

There was silence. A minute passed. The elephant came back to the side of the road he had

left and, looking at the camel, said, "You may enjoy my shadow!"

"Come to my shadow!" the camel told the donkey.

"You can have the cool of my shadow," the donkey told the lamb.

"Thanks a lot. But I don't need any. To be frank, none of you have any shadow any longer!" said the lamb.

All became conscious of the fact that a big cloud had hidden the sun.

"How wonderful it is that the cloud demands no fee!" the lamb was heard mumbling.

The other animals walked with their heads hung.



AUSTRALIA IS THEIR HOME

What is the connection between a mammal that lays eggs and a badger-like creature with a pouch?

"This animal is undoubtedly a fake," declared an eminent 18th century scientist on examining the first stuffed platypus, a kind of duck-bill, to be sent to England from Australia. Evidently this extraordinary creature was a mammal, yet it had a duck's webbed feet and bill.

Before long, however, more specimens followed, and zoologists were finally convinced that the creature really existed. It was eventually classified under a new order of mammals, the Monotremes. Only one other creature shares this order with the platypus—the spiny anteater, or echidna, which also lives in Australia.

Although the platypus is one of Australia's best known animals, few people have ever seen one in the wild. This shy creature lives in the lakes and streams of Eastern Australia and Tasmania, in regions sparsely populated by man.

The platypus is a vigorous swimmer, propelled by its webbed front feet and steered by the rear feet. The flat, beaver-like tail controls up-and-down movement, as the creature dives to the bottom, or bobs buoyantly up to the surface to breathe.

The platypus has an enormous appetite. When feeding, it closes its eyes under the

water and shovels blindly about in the mud for the shellfish and worms which it likes to eat. Its beak is specially adapted for this purpose, being soft and sensitive.

On land, the platypus uses its strong claws to dig itself a long tunnel in the river bank. At the end of the burrow the female will hollow out a nest chamber. In due course, she will lay her eggs—from one to three in a clutch—which are about the size of marbles, with tough leathery skins.

The baby platypuses hatch after ten days'



incubation. Unlike their parents, they have no bills; instead, they have protruding lips with which they suck milk from pores in their mother's skin.

One big mystery remains about the platypus. This is the poison spurs which are to be found on the hind legs of the adult male. They appear only during the breeding season, and can inject a painful venom if the animal is carelessly handled. But no one knows exactly why the spurs are there, for the platypus has few natural enemies.



Strange Mammal

The wombat is another animal whose very name evokes Australia. Unlike the platypus, it is a very common creature, well known to Australians, who sometimes call them badgers. This certainly describes their appearance and habits, but there the resemblance ends, for the wombat is no ordinary mammal, but a marsupial, that is to say, having a pouch in the body in which its infant is nurtured.

Marsupials give birth to tiny young which crawl into their mother's pouch at a very early stage in their development. Kangaroos and koalas belong to the marsupial family. But unlike the Kangaroo, whose pouch opens to the front, the wombat's pouch opens to the rear, making it much easier for the infant to find its way in.

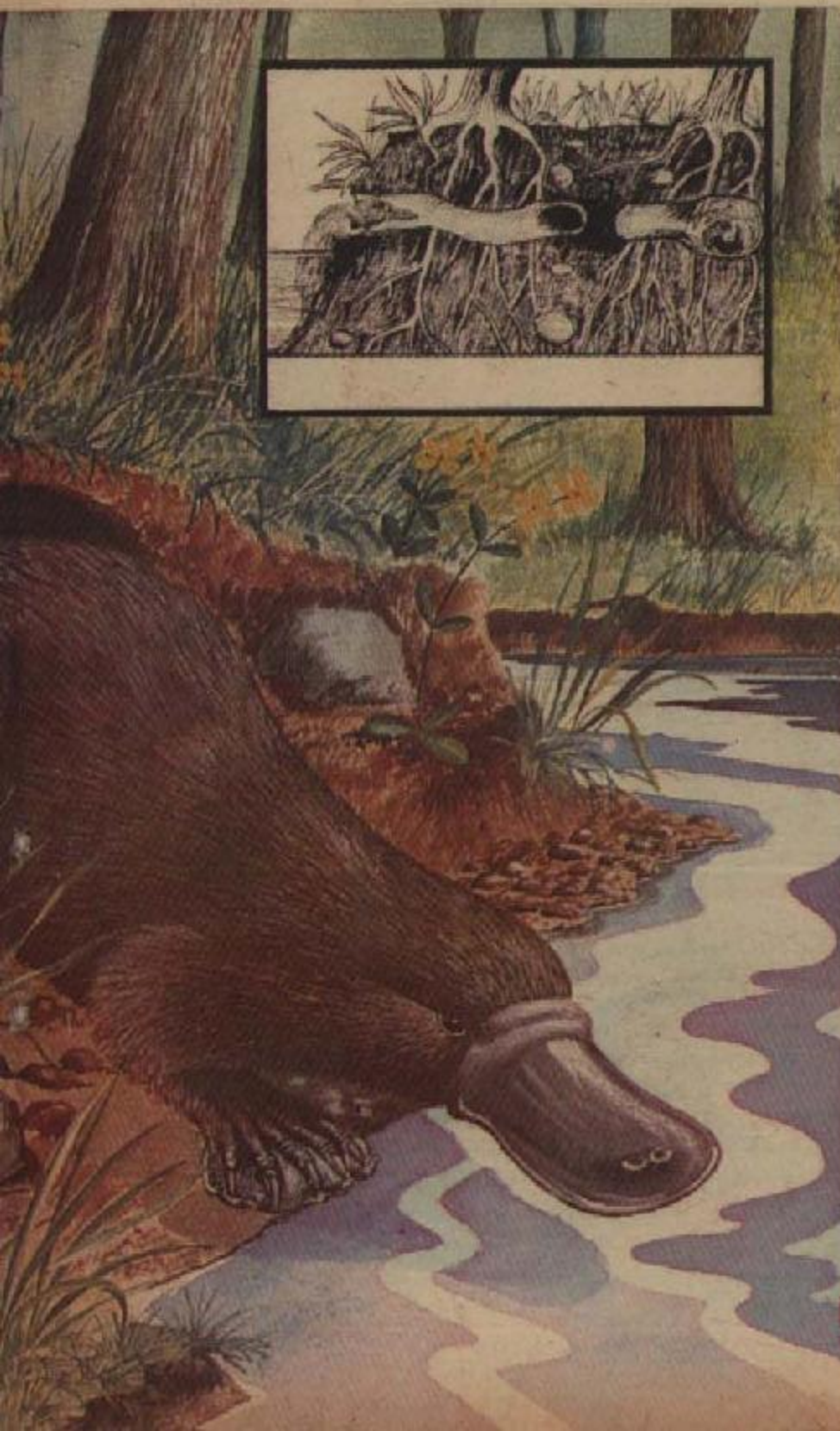
An adult wombat is about the same size as a badger, and is a heavily built creature, about 100 centimetres long, including its stumpy tail. It has clawed feet for digging and small eyes. It is active mainly at night.

Wombats move about with a shuffling gait, and will grunt or hiss if confronted on their nocturnal wanderings. But they are peaceable animals, and prefer to run away rather than become involved in a fight.

A vegetarian diet of grass and bark satisfies the wombat, whose teeth, like those of the rodents, grow continuously to make up for wear and tear. There are several species, one of which has a hairy nose and silky fur, while the common wombat has a bare nose and coarse fur. One kind of wombat has such a bristly coat that it is said to make a very effective door mat.

Wombats use their powerful claws to dig long burrows, which may often extend to 30 metres or more, with a grassy nest at the end. But being such a good excavator has brought the wombat into conflict with farmers, who do not take kindly to having their land riddled with a maze of tunnels.

In some parts of Australia, wombats are prized for food, and this has occasionally brought a threat of local extinction. Fortunately for wombats, they are quiet, shy creatures which do their best to keep out of man's way, spending most of the daylight hours asleep in their long burrows. Unlike the platypus, which is a protected species, the wombat seems well able to look after itself.



SWANS FROM THE MANSAROVAR

High above the Himalayas there is the Lake Mansarovar. The great mountain, Gaurishankar, casts its shadow on it. Nymphs come to bathe there. Gods and goddesses too find it a great treat to spend some moments around this wonderful lake.

Beautiful swans with golden wings dwell in the lake, swimming playfully among its splendid lotuses.

"Come on, let's go and have a look at the world below these lofty hills," one day one swan

said to another.

"I've heard that there is nothing very charming down below," said the second swan. "Nevertheless, I've no objection to giving you company."

The two swans took off. Sometimes flapping their strong wings and sometimes gliding with the course of wind, they crossed the grand ranges of hills one after another.

It took them three days to leave the Himalayas behind them. Soon they could see a village—its inhabitants busy



with their daily chores.

At last they saw a lake on the outskirts of the village. They were tired. They made a majestic descent on the bank of the lake.

The swans, the storks and the herons belonging to the lake saw with surprise the sudden appearance of the two strange swans.

"Where from do you come?" the oldest stork took a step forward and asked.

"We come from the great lake, the glory of which is sung by sages, the Mansarovar," replied the two swans.

"Mansarovar? We've never heard of that. What is special

about that place, anyway?" asked the stork. All the other birds of the lake had by then come closer to the strangers.

"Everything about the Mansarovar is special, friends. Around it there are golden trees bearing fruits for the gods. Nymphs bathe and sing in the waters of the Sarovar. The atmosphere is charged with bliss."

The birds looked at one another meaningfully. Then spoke the old stork again, "To be frank, strangers, we don't see anything special in your description."

The two swans from the Mansarovar looked crestfallen.



"We're sorry, but if one or two of you decide to visit the Sarovar, we can guide you there. You can see things for yourselves. Perhaps you'll understand then," they said.

"Not a bad idea. We'll see about it. But what do you eat?" asked the stork. Every other bird grew eager to hear what the strangers would reply to this question.

The swans from the Mansarovar looked bright. "We'll tell you. We eat something really special—the roots of the lotus plants."

"What?" several voices asked.

"Roots of the lotus plants!

They taste like the heavenly nectar."

"Why? Don't you have worms, frogs or snails?"

"No!"

"And you wish us to feed on those roots when we go there?" demanded the old stork.

"Well...." the two swans found themselves stammering.

Suddenly all the birds of that lake burst into peals of laughter. The volume of the sound went on increasing.

The two swans from the Mansarovar flew away. The echo of the laughter haunted them for a furlong. They speeded up and kept flying nonstop until they had reached the Mansarovar.



THE FOOL'S CAP

There was a king who had a very clever and charming daughter. Since she was his only child, the one to marry her was to be the heir to the throne.

But the princess said that she just won't marry any prince or nobleman fixed up by her relatives. "I shall marry the man who can prove superior to me in wit!" she said.

Many came, but they retreated hastily. None was found to be more witty than the princess.

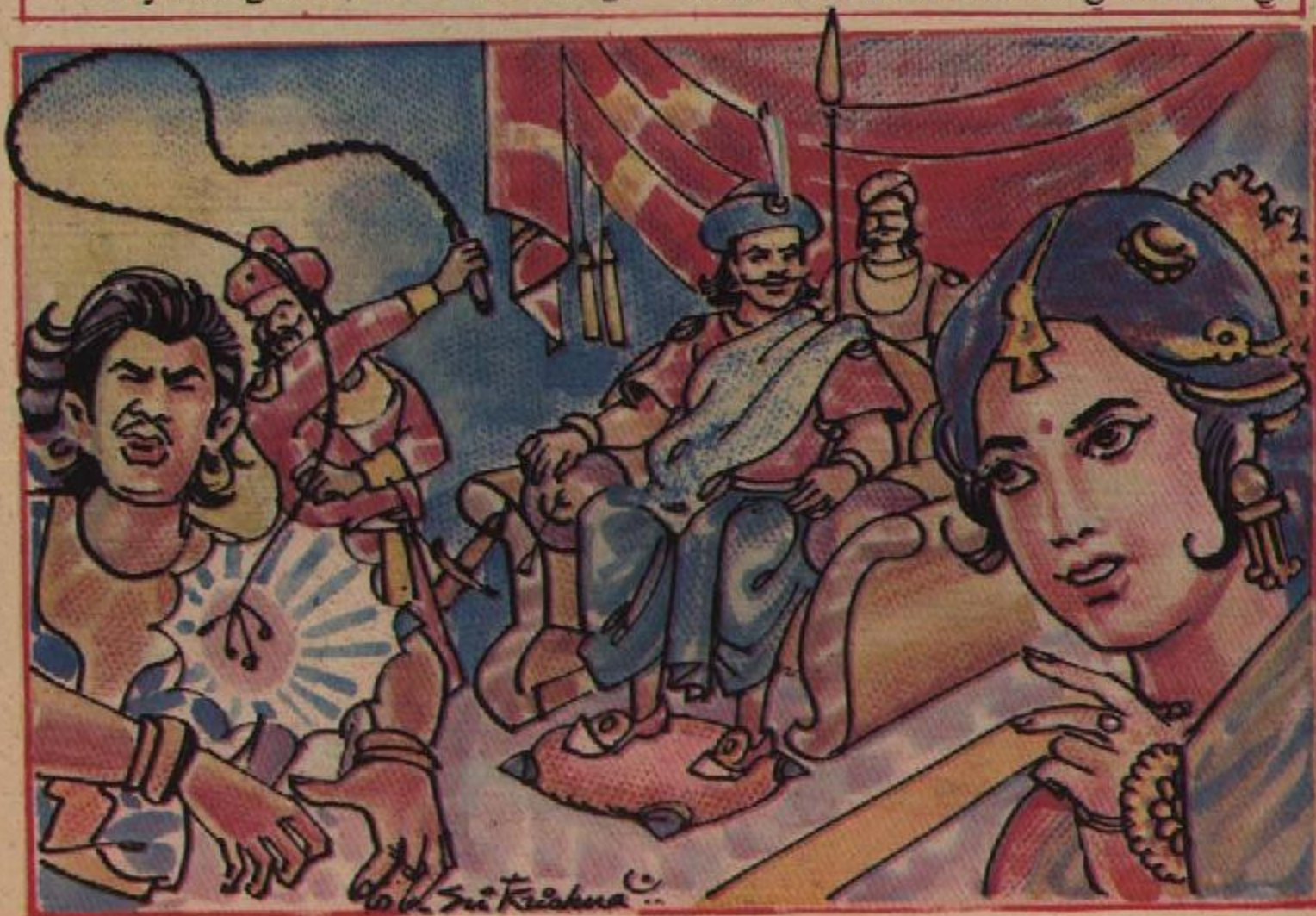
"My daughter," said the king,

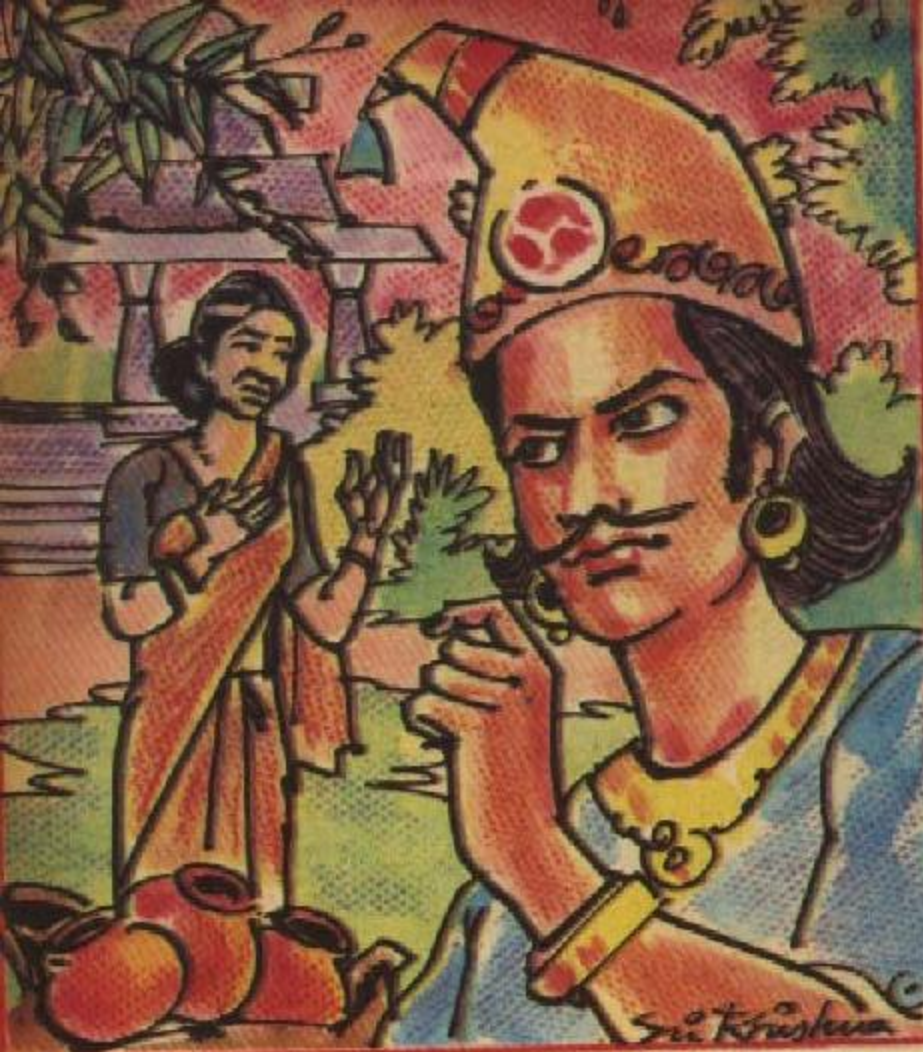
"at this rate, I don't think, I'm going to have a heir to the throne ever! Let us change the condition. Let us declare that one who can cheat me shall win your hand in marriage."

"Let it be so, dear father," agreed the princess.

Now, while announcing the new condition, the king also made it clear that those who failed in their effort to cheat the king would be whipped hard.

Again, many came, but none succeeded in cheating the king.





They went back carrying stripes on their backs.

A poor widow had a son. His friends took him to be a fool. Indeed, they had once ceremoniously presented him with a fool's cap.

"Mother, mother, bless me. I'm going to try my hand in winning the hand of the princess," one fine morning the youngman informed his mother.

"Why not, my son! I bless you all right. If you succeed, you can return the fool's cap to your friends ceremoniously," said the mother.

"Mother, thank you for reminding me of the fool's cap"

The young man took out the cap and put it on and strode forth smartly.

At the turn of the road he saw an old woman out to sell some earthen pots.

"What will be the total value of the pots you're carrying in your sack, granny?" asked the young man.

"No less than three rupees, sonny."

"Good. Will you do as I say if I pay you five rupees?" The young man handed out the amount to the old woman and whispered to her what he will like her to do.

Both reached the square in front of the king's palace.

"Smash a pot!" commanded the young man.

At once the old woman picked up a pot and dashed it on the ground.

The young man asked her to do the same thing once again and the woman did it without any hesitation.

This went on. Several pots were smashed.

That was the time when the king was in the habit of taking a stroll. The unusual situation attracted his attention.

"Why are you smashing your

pots ?" he demanded of the woman.

"I cannot say, my lord! This stranger commands me to do so and I cannot but do so!" the woman replied humbly.

"Why do you ask her to do so?" the king now asked the young man.

"My lord, although I should not reveal the reason to anybody else, I cannot keep it a secret from you. This cap I wear has a strange power. One would do whatever I ask one to do with this cap on my head. I had not used it for a long time. This morning I felt like trying it," explained the young man.

The king got curious. He took the cap and put it on his own head and commanded the lady to smash yet another of her pots. She did so without the least hesitation.

The King was bent upon buying the cap. After some bargaining the young man sold it for a hundred gold coins.

In the evening the young man met the king. There was no need for much dialogue between them, for the king had by then realised that he had been cheated. "Well, I've no objection to your marrying the princess, provided you know who the princess is!" said the king.



and he asked the young man to come back in the morning.

As soon as the young man arrived, he was led into the inner apartments of the palace. At one place he saw a full dozen damsels waiting for him—all dressed in the same way and of more or less the same age!

"Find out who the princess is. I give you two minutes. If you succeed, you marry her, if you fail, Heavens have mercy on your back!" said the king.

The young man was ready. He brought out a folded handkerchief from his pocket and emptied it on the throng of those young ladies. A little

mouse leaped into the throng.

There were shrieks and the ladies got scattered. But one of them fainted right away. At once the others sat down, crying, "O dear Princess!" and tried to revive her.

"There is the princess my lord," declared the jubilant young man.

"You win!" said the king.

The marriage was a grand affair. Years later, when the old king died and the young man ascended the throne, he wore the fool's cap under the crown. "This secured me the princess and the kingdom!" he said to his near and dear ones.





Unsolved Mysteries

WHO MOVED THE COFFINS?

lies to which they belong.

And what would the family members say when they open the vaults and see the coffins scattered or upside down or left in perpendicular positions?

They will naturally conclude that spirits have done so, since the vaults did not contain any money or anything valuable for any burglar to enter it. In any case, the doors of the vaults remained intact; the locks looked untouched.

Presuming that some human beings managed to enter the vaults, what could have inspired them only to play with the coffins? They do not break them open!

So, the owners of the vaults inside which such things happened took it for granted that this was supernatural. But the Governor of Barbados was not one of those to swallow this theory. "Some people are in love with mischief—an original kind of mischief. I must expose

Strange things are rumoured to happen in the island of Barbados, a small country in the West Indies. But we are not concerned with rumours and tales. What surprises us is the behaviour of the coffins there!

Is "Behaviour" the word for coffins?

What else would you say when you find the coffins moving about—or standing up—all by themselves?

This gives a jolt to our rational mind. But this is a fact.

The vaults are locked. They are not opened for anybody on any occasion except for the responsible members of the fami-

them," he decided.

He chose one vault—that belonged to the well-known Chase family. It stood above the caribbean. Whenever the family members opened the vault, they found the coffins in a disarray.

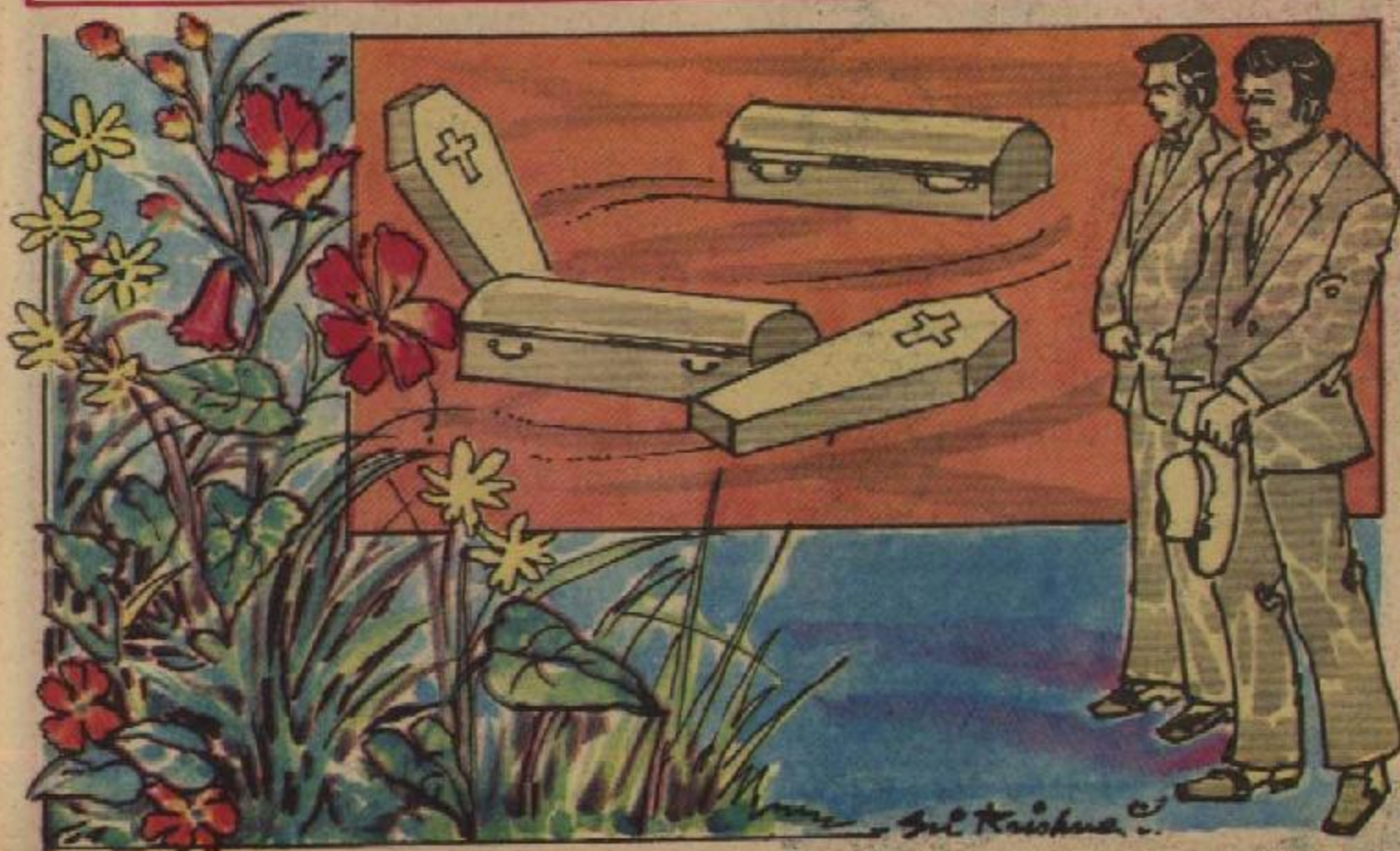
In 1819 the Governor personally supervised the vault in the company of a team of experts. Each coffin's position was marked. The entire floor was covered with a soft sand so that no creature could step on it without leaving foot-prints. They ensured that there was no hidden passage into the vault, and then, after locking the door, he cemented it. His official seal was put on the cement and on

the lock.

He let nine months pass. He and his team returned to the vault. The seals, the lock and the door not only *looked* untouched, they *were* untouched as the experts were unanimous after examining them.

But inside? No coffin was left untouched. They had all been pulled this way or that. Whether the beings who did this "touched" them or not is a different question.

The Governor and his team had no explanation then. Nobody else has any satisfactory explanation to this day. The bizarre thing is happening from time to time to this day!



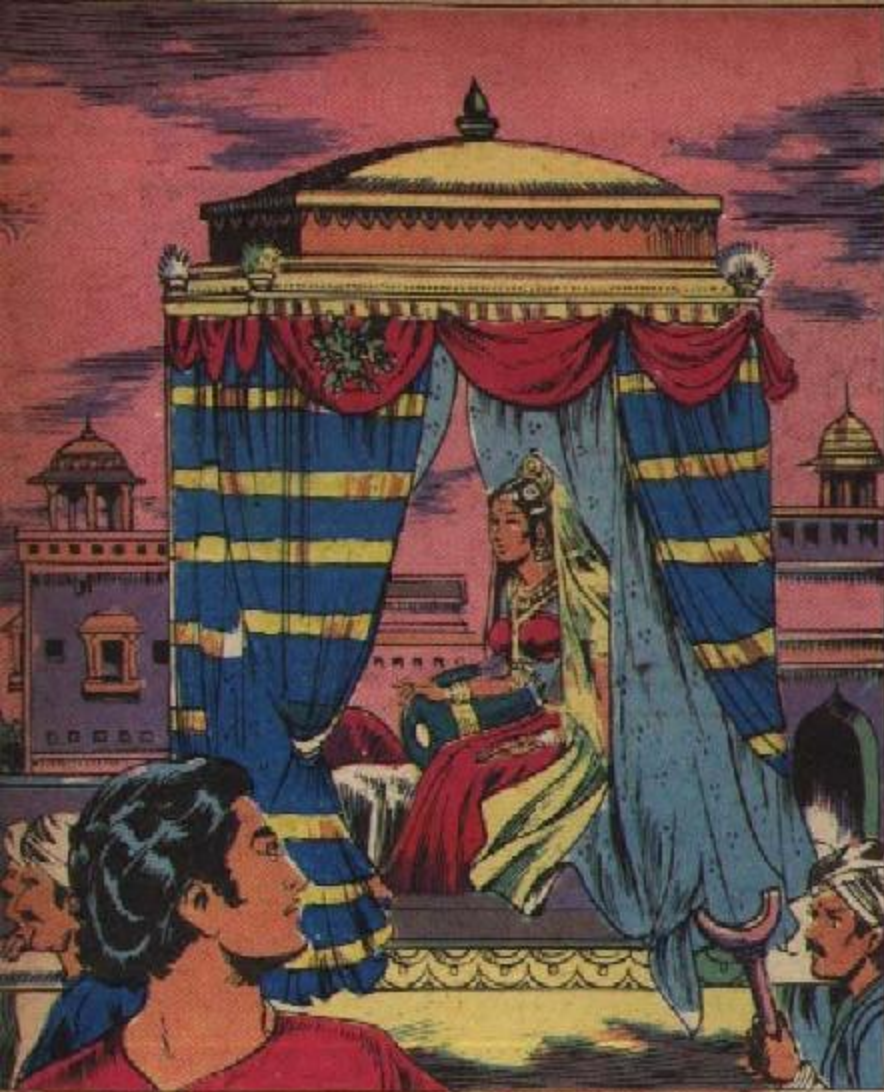


*New Tales of King
Vikram and the Vampire*

The Simpleton and The Demon

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals between the moaning of jackals and the thunderclaps could be heard the eerie laughter of ghosts. Flashes of lightning revealed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, I know not whether it is in your wisdom or in your foolishness that you are out to do something unusual. All I can say is, the success of someone's mission perhaps does not depend on either his wisdom or his foolishness. It seems, it depends on chances. Let me give you an example. Pay attention to it. That might bring you some relief."



The vampire went on: In days gone by there lived a famous merchant in the city of Pratis-
than, named Varun Varma. His only child was a girl, Sumitra.

In the same city lived a young man named Devdas. Among his friends he was known to be a simpleton. They teased him for his naivety and credulousness and laughed at him.

It so happened that one day Devdas's eyes fell on Sumitra. He was charmed by her. He had already heard that Sumitra was a very good-natured girl. He had also heard that her father was looking for a suitable young man to marry her.

At once he met a friend of his named Kumar whom he knew to be very clever. "My dear friend, I'll very much like to marry Sumitra, Varun Varma's daughter. Won't you help me in the matter?"

Kumar was amused. One to marry Sumitra was to inherit the property of Varun Varma who was the richest man in the city. How can a simpleton like Devdas aspire to that fortune?

Kumar, as ever, planned to have a laugh at his friend's cost.

"Why don't you meet Varun Varma and put the proposal straight to him? I've no doubt in my mind that he'd be only too pleased to have you as his son-in-law!" he said.

Devdas wasted no time. He met the merchant that very evening and said that he'd like to marry his daughter.

The merchant too was amused. He understood that Devdas was a very simple-hearted boy. But he did not like to offend him. He wished to turn him out in a diplomatic way. "My boy," he said, "You seem to be a bright young man. Why should I object to your marrying my daughter? But I have decided upon a condition.

You have to fulfil that condition if I am to accept your proposal."

"What's the condition, sir?"

"Well, you must bring me gold equal to your weight within a week from today. I don't mind if it is a pound less or more!"

"I see." Devdas stood thoughtful for a moment. Then he left, saying that he'd try his best to fulfil the condition.

Varun Varma was sure that he had seen the last of the audacious young man.

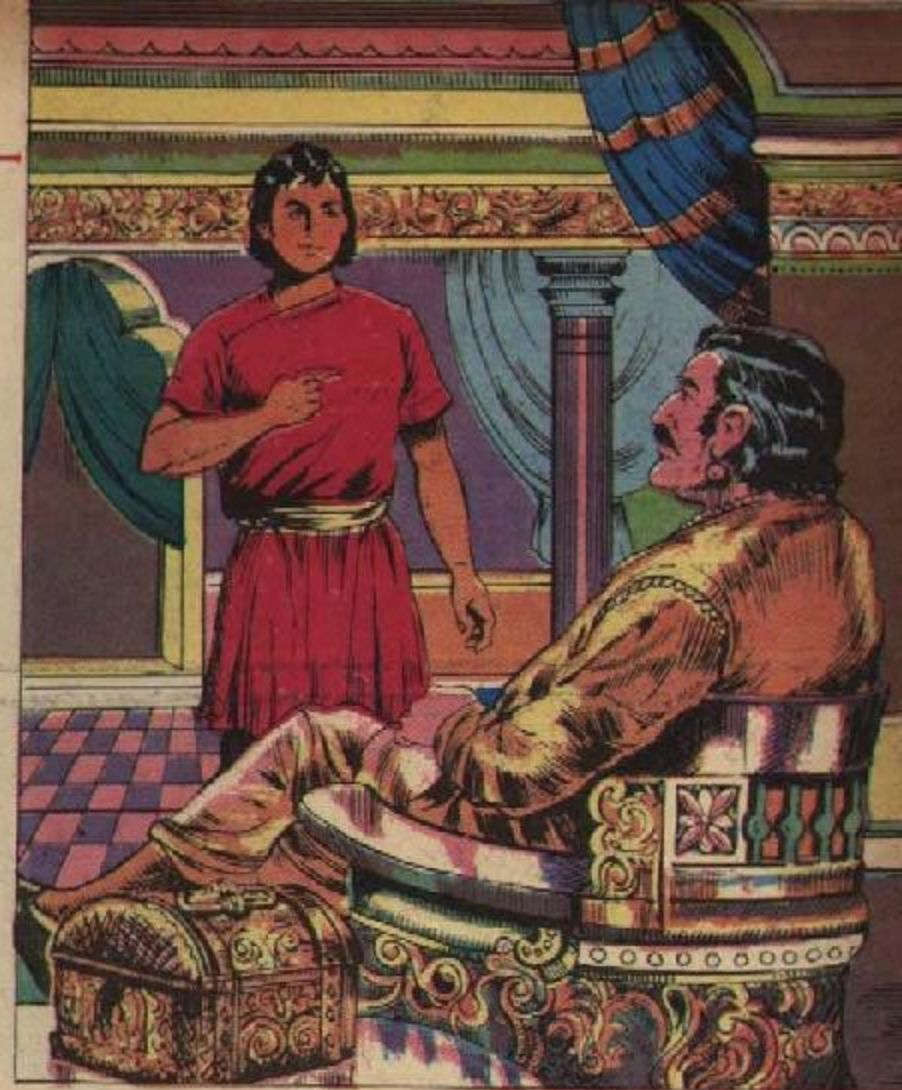
Devdas went back to Kumar and said, "Now, all depends on my getting gold equal to my weight!"

"Is that all?" Kumar asked, laughing in his sleeves. "It is not a high price when compared to your marrying Sumitra and owning her father's wealth. The question is, where to get so much gold."

"Right. That is the question," agreed Devdas.

Kumar's face brightened up. "Only one man can help you. He is the yogi who is camping in the temple courtyard. I know that he has changed metal scraps into gold for some people," he said.

Kumar knew very well that the so-called yogi was a fraud.

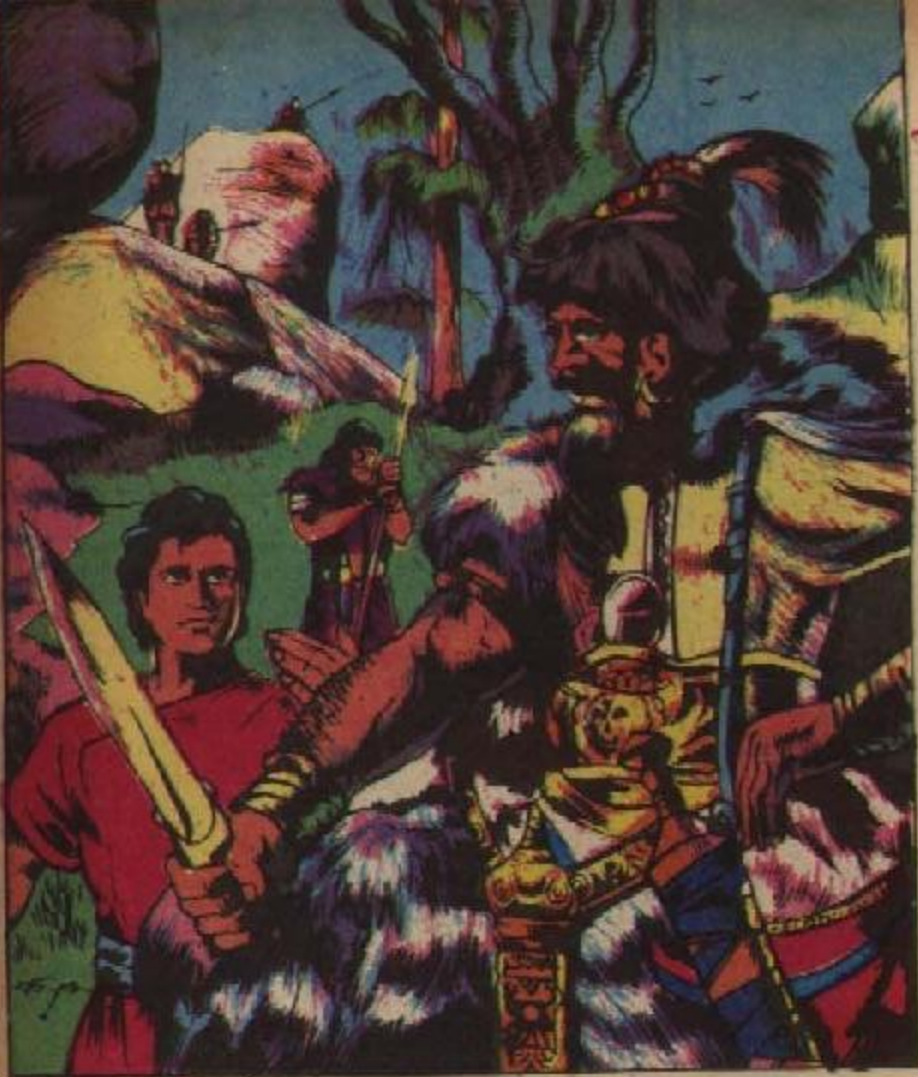


He had swindled several people through his tall promises. Kumar was sure that Devdas would make himself a laughing-stock once again.

Devdas proceeded to the temple and told the false yogi what he needed.

During the previous night the false yogi's camp had been looted by a notorious bandit named Bhaloo. The false yogi was anxious to get hold of the bandit somehow or the other. "I'll give you the gold you need if you can bring Bhaloo the bandit to me," he said.

Everybody in the locality knew that Bhaloo lived in the



hills in the nearby forest. Nobody ever dared to enter that part of the forest. But Devdas had no fear. Soon he was in the forest looking for Bhaloo.

A member of Bhaloo's gang saw the unarmed Devdas and was surprised. He led the young man to the bandit-chief's presence.

Devdas put his problem frankly before Bhaloo. The bandit-chief did not feel like killing him. At the same time he did not wish him to go back alive, because he had found out their hideout. He asked Devdas, "Have you heard about the demon who lives in that eastern

hill?"

"Yes."

"He possesses a lot of wealth. Why don't you meet him and request him to help you?"

The demon was the terror of that forest. All were afraid of him and there was no question of any human being ever going to meet him. Bhaloo was sure that the young man shall never return from the demon's den.

Devdas walked for a whole day and reached the demon's den. He could see the demon, seated on a rock, looking at him with great surprise. On sighting the demon Devdas smiled and greeted him. The demon looked even more surprised.

Devdas told him what he wanted. The demon was a kindhearted creature, though his appearance scared everybody. He showed Devdas a few pieces of diamond and said, "Tell Varun Varma that I can give diamonds worth ten times the amount of gold he requires. It would be easy for you to carry diamonds. If he insists on having gold, then we have to think of some way to despatch the stuff to his house."

Devdas returned to Varun Varma and narrated his adven-

tures to him in detail. Then he asked, "Sir, will it do if I bring those diamonds?"

Varun Varma, who listened to him with bated breath, said with a smile, "My boy, I have got something more valuable than the diamonds. You shall marry Sumitra."

The vampire paused and then asked King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O King, was it not foolish of Varun Varma to agree to give his daughter in marriage to a simpleton like Devdas? Secondly, why did he give up the chance of getting those diamonds offered by the demon? Answer me, O King, if

you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

Forthwith answered King Vikram, "Far from being foolish, Varun Varma was a truly wise man. Devdas appeared a simpleton to ordinary people. But Varun Varma recognised in him true courage. If Devdas braved into the presence of the bandit and the demon, it was because he had a childlike faith in the goodness of all creatures. Ultimately his faith produced the result. He was successful in his mission.

"Varun Varma saw that De-





vdas was so good that even a demon was kind to him. Being a human being, should he fail to recognise the young man's quality?

"It is easy to be clever and crafty. It is not easy to be simple and brave. Varun Varma knew that Devdas had these rare qualities in his character and they

were more valuable than the diamonds. Varun Varma was not greedy. He had no reason to send Devdas to fetch the diamonds promised by the demon."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

WONDER WITH COLOURS



TIPU SULTAN

Haidar Ali, the ruler of Mysore, refused to be awed by the growing might of the British in India. Conflict between him and the British East India Company grew sharper. War broke out. Haidar Ali fought on till he died of cancer in 1782.



His son Tipu Sultan took the leadership and went on fighting. He was brave, intelligent and determined never to bow down to the foreigners. He fought most valiantly, creating panic in the enemy camp.

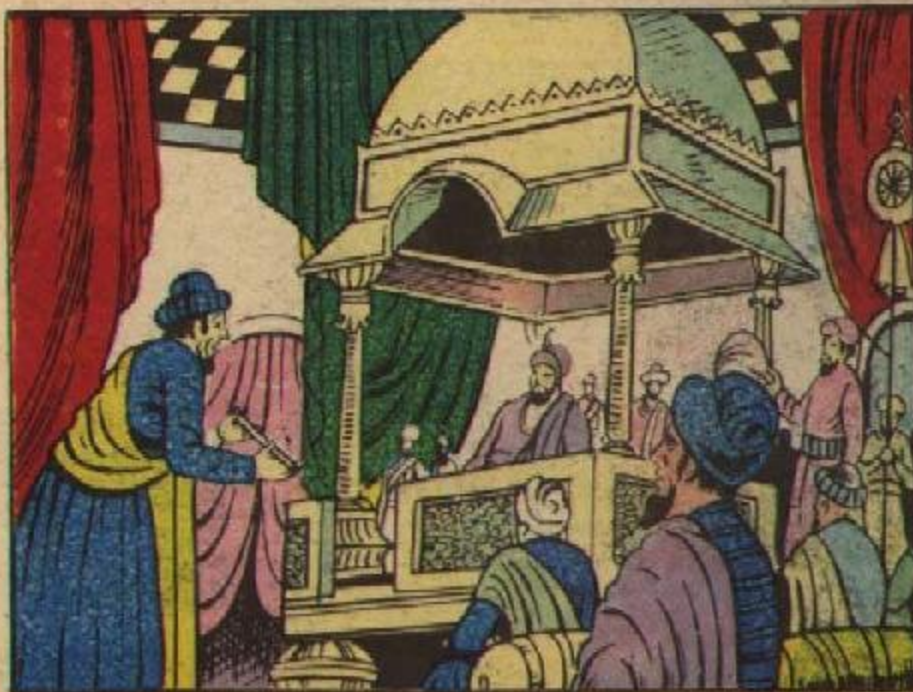


The English army was defeated. Not only that, under Tipu Sultan's able generalship and excellent military strategy, the commander of the East India Company's army, Brigadier Mathews, was taken prisoner. The Company was obliged to make a treaty with Tipu in 1784.



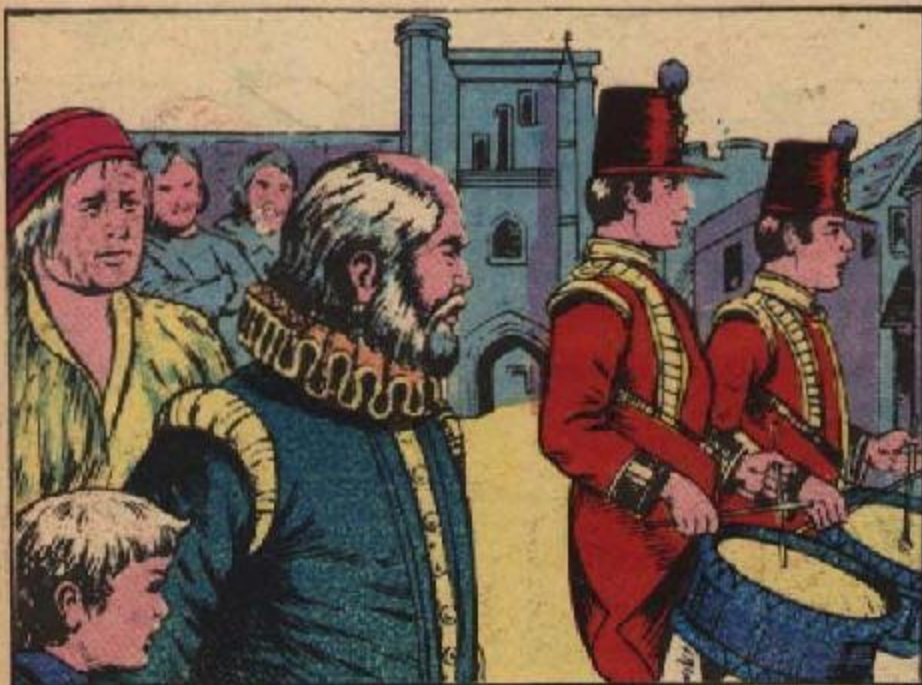
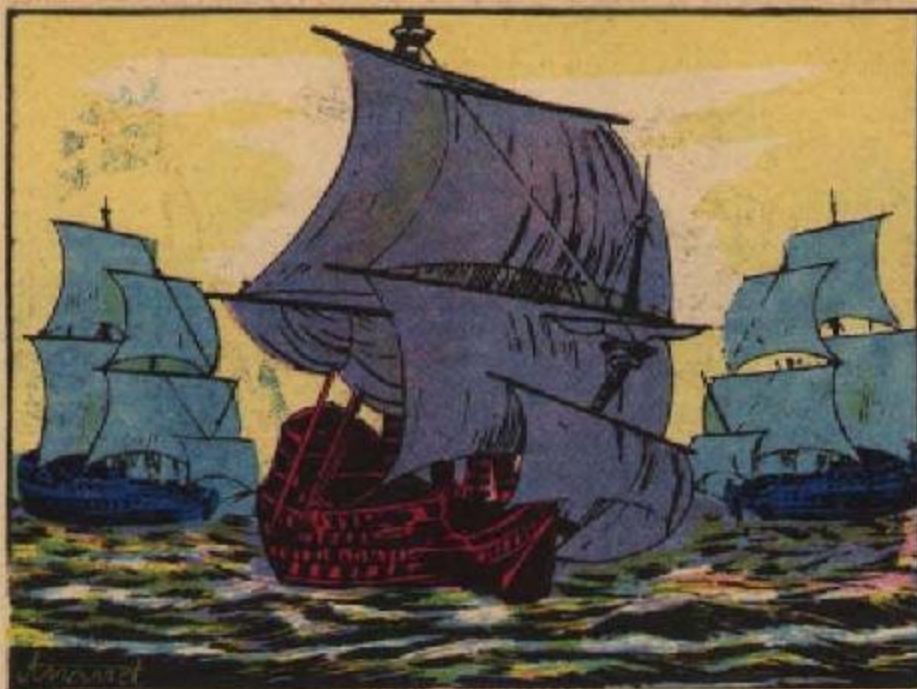
Peace prevailed for some time between the Company and Tipu Sultan. But the Governor-General of British India, Lord Cornwallis, was waiting for his chance to humble the hero of Mysore. He sent a huge army against the Sultan thrice, himself leading the army on the second and third expeditions.

The English took the city of Srirangapattan. Tipu Sultan made a treaty with the Company in the year 1792, conceding the greater part of his state to the enemy. The English also compelled two sons of the Sultan to live under them as hostages.



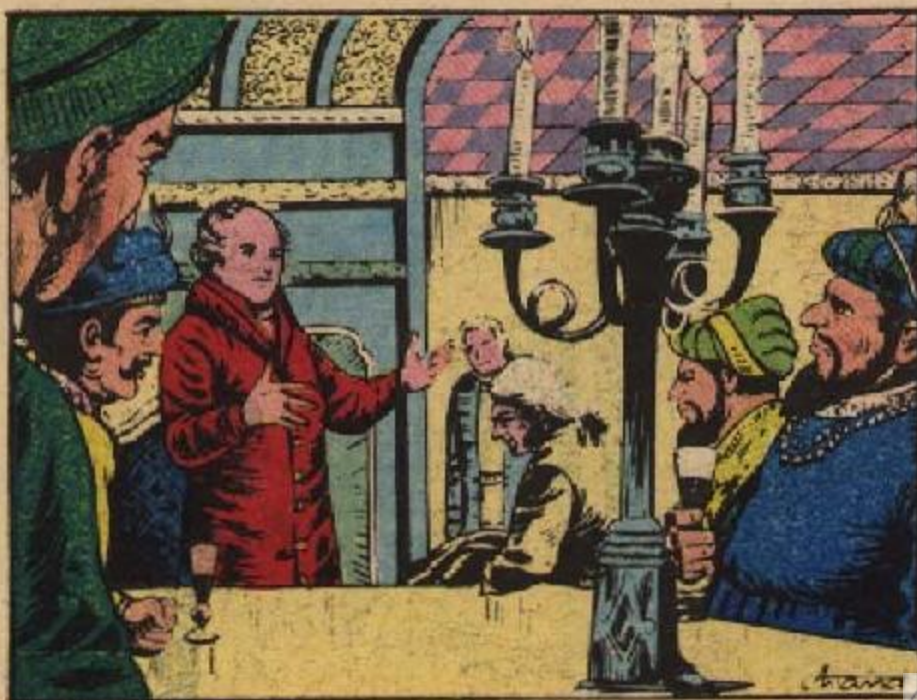
Tipu Sultan was not the man to tolerate the situation. He desired alliance with the Nizam of Hyderabad. For that he sent proposals to the Nizam that let there be marriage between his son and the Nizam's daughter.

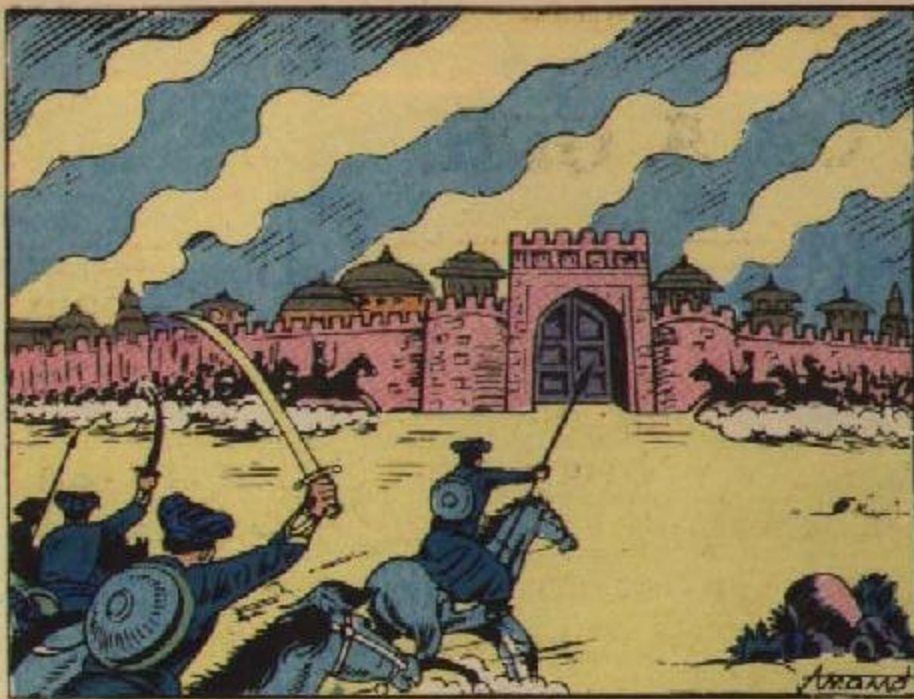
But the Nizam was in league with the Company. Tipu Sultan sent messengers to Arabia, Afghanistan, Turkey and France for help against the British. But there was no much response from these quarters. All were busy with their own problems.



Tipu Sultan was wrongly informed that the French had a large army in Mauritius. He sent a secret message to the French Governor of the island, Malartic, to send the army to his aid. There was no French army there. The Governor, out of his goodwill for Tipu, publicly announced that whoever wanted could go to India to fight the English as Tipu's soldiers.

The new Governor-General of India, Lord Wellesley, got the news. Sure that Tipu Sultan was preparing for war, he declared war against Tipu in 1798. Wellesley had as his ally the Nizam. The Marathas too helped him. Thus, Tipu's enemies became formidable.





The city of Srirangapattan was attacked from three directions. The Company's army alone had more than 35,000 men. Even then Tipu perhaps would have defeated them. But the alliance the Company had made with the other powers ruined the Sultan's chances.

Tipu Sultan was asked by the British to surrender and lead a peaceful life as a pension-holder. But he spurned the offer and resolved to fight unto death. With exemplary courage and skill he faced the enemy. It was a fiercely fought battle.



Tipu Sultan remains a bright character in history. He never accepted any offer of an alliance against any Indian king, though others aligned themselves with the company against him. He was courteous towards his Hindu subjects. Like Rana Pratap who consistently opposed the Mughals, Tipu Sultan consistently opposed the British.

LUCK OF A GIRL

"Here is more!"

These words were followed by a sharp sound of slap and a cry.

There was no mystery in it. A fat idle girl loved to go on eating and when she wanted more, her mother slapped her and she cried.

What was unusual in it? Nothing.

But it so happened that a young man was riding by. He just got curious to know what was happening. He poked his nose—sorry—his whole face

which was a nobleman's—into the hut and asked, "What's going on?"

Now, the embarrassed mother said, "My daughter loves to work so much that every now and then she wants more work! I have to beat her occasionally."

"Really? I should love a girl who loves work. Give her to me," said the rider.

The mother was so tired of her daughter—a sack of good-for-nothingness—that she at once obliged the young man.





The young man led the girl to his fine mansion on a hill, overlooking the sea. He showed her a fat lot of fibre and said, "Can you spin this all in a fortnight? If you can, you're likely to qualify yourself to become my wife. Off into the sea I go now!"

The young man, who was the captain of a ship, sailed away, leaving the girl to her tears. Tears not because they were separated, but because she did not know anything of spinning.

But the mansion was beautiful with gardens. The kitchen teemed with a variety of food-stuff. She kept herself engaged in cooking and eating, but

whenever she remembered her work, she cried.

Her crying increased in volume as days passed. On the 14th day she wailed.

Suddenly, with a gust of wind, what came shooting through the window looked like a folded blanket. But it sat up and was found to be an old lady.

"I'll spin for you," she said and began to work. In an hour she had finished spinning the whole hemp, but her eye-lashes had grown as big as hand fans.

"How can I repay you, kind old lady?" asked the joyous girl.

"Just invite me to your wedding party. Call me by my name which is Columbina, and I'll come. You'll regret if you forget to do this."

The woman went out with another whiff of breeze.

The young man returned home the next day and was surprised and delighted to see the work done.

"Now, here is another work for you. I've brought a few bags of gold and silver grains, all mixed up. You have to separate them in a fortnight's time. If you can, you'll almost qualify yourself to become my wife," said the young man and he rode

away. But he had brought a number of gifts for the girl and she spent her time happily amidst them for thirteen days.

But on the fourteenth day she gave out a big wail and plop fell from the chimney what looked like a sack but what was found to be an old woman.

"Eat and play merrily, child, I'll do the needful," said she and she began sifting the gold from the silver. She finished the work in an hour, but her eyes protruded like balls.

"How can I repay you, good, old lady?"

"I am Columbara. Call me for your wedding feast. Beware of

your fate if you don't."

She went away and the young man returned home the next day and was surprised and delighted.

"I'm going out once again, to be back in a week. Here are some raw stuff and you've to make cakes out of them. If you have done them by the time I am back, you become my wife."

The young man went away, leaving some more gifts for the girl.

For five days the girl forgot everything except the gifts. It was on the sixth day that she began to cry.

And out of a skylight fell





down what looked like a bale but what was really on old lady.

"Don't cry. Eat, sleep and make merry. Let me make the cakes for you."

The old lady baked cakes of different flavours with great concentration. As she did it, fingers grew long.

"How to repay you, good old lady?"

"I'm Columbun. Call me for your wedding feast. Woe to you if you don't."

She went away and soon the young man was back. Surprised and delighted, he now proceeded to fix the date for their wedding.

But try as she may the girl

could not remember the names of those three ladies. Day and night she churned her memory, but to no avail. Afraid of their curse and sorry for herself she took to bed.

The young man did everything within his capacity to make her smile. Nothing worked. He felt very sad and, one day, for a change, went out into the forest for hunting.

A whirlwind drove him into a cave. He heard a conversation taking place in the adjoining cave:

"O Columbina!"

"O Culumbara!"

"O Culumbun!"

"The girl will never wed and we will never enjoy her wedding feast. Let's go away."

"Yes, but let's wait for a week."

"For two weeks."

The young man peeped in and saw the strange figures, one with eyelashes big as fans, another with eyes protruding like balls and the third one with a fingers that was like a cannon. He thought the experience was funny enough for reporting to the sick girl. He did so as soon as he was back home.

The girl sat up at hearing the

three names that she had forgotten. She laughed with so much happiness that she got cured in no time.

There were no more problems for fixing a date for their wedding. Said the bride, "Since those three ladies made me laugh and that cured me off my sickness, let's invite them to our wedding feast."

The bridegroom agreed. In a corner of the large hall a special table was set for the three. While the feast was on, the bridegroom, holding the bride's hand, went near the table where the three ladies sat eating. To the first the bridegroom asked, "How did your eyelashes grow

to this size?"

"Working hard—spinning," she replied.

"How did your eye-balls protrude?" the young man asked the second old lady.

"Working hard, sifting two things."

"How did your fingers grow so long?" he asked the third old lady.

"Working hard—kneading."

The bridegroom nodded. Then he whispered to his bride, "Darling, you must not or sift or knead. What I mean is, you must not work hard."

The girl had never given her consent to anything so readily!





Three Orations

The Mulla paused for a few seconds and then asked, "Do you know what I'm going to talk about?"

The audience smiled, sure that the speaker himself will answer his question.

"I am waiting for your answer," said the Mulla and he repeated his question.

"We don't know," cried the audience in a chorus.

"What?" asked the Mulla with a snort. "You do not know? Really? If you do not know what I'm going to speak about, how can it be possible for you to understand my speech? Thank you."

The Mulla returned to his lodge. The mayor at once caught up with him and requested him to come again and the Mulla returned without much fuss.

"My dear friends," he began, "since you have brought me here for a second time, I know how serious you are. Before I begin my speech, let me ask you a question."

Mulla Nasruddin was on a visit to a nearby town. From his witty talk the mayor of the town gathered the idea that the Mulla was a great orator.

When he proposed that the Mulla be pleased to lecture to an audience, the Mulla, partly out of courtesy and partly because he felt quite flattered, could not refuse the proposal.

There was a large audience awaiting the orator. The Mulla, all smiles, climbed the rostrum.

"Noble and pious citizens!" he began, "You must honestly answer a question."

The audience, all agog with curiosity, waited in silence.

This time the audience was ready with a different answer.

"Do you know what I am going to talk about?" The Mulla paused.

The people looked at one another. Then some of them shouted hopefully, "We know! We know!"

"Very good!" complimented the Mulla. "How wise you are! One can't but marvel at you for your knowing beforehand what I'm going to speak. And since you know already what I'm going to speak, it is absolutely unnecessary for me to go on. So I go!" The Mulla left the stage.

The audience did not know what to do. But the mayor and his lieutenants caught hold of the Mulla once again and brought him back.

"Look! This will be the last time. And you have to leave me

thereafter," cautioned the Mulla.

The Mulla then faced the audience, puffed up his chest and said: "Gentlemen, it is so kind of you to be so determined to hear me. I ask you again, 'Do you know what I'm going to speak about?'"

The audience had already devised a plan so that there might be little chance for the speaker to excuse himself. Some members of the audience yelled, "We know! We know!" The others raised their voice and shouted, "We don't know! We don't know!"

"That's very fine. Now, I suggest, those who do not know shall hear from those who know. Thank you," said the Mulla and he left the rostrum. No longer did the mayor try to stop him.

Retold by P. Raja.





THE USE OF STRENGTH

Raghu was very proud of his strength. He was boasting about his muscle and Harish kept listening to him with due attention.

Harish was lean and thin, but Raghu was strong and stout.

The two young men were returning from the bazar. Harish had bought a bale of clothes which he was carrying on his head. Raghu had nothing with him.

"I wish I had strength like yours!" Harish said with a sigh.

"By the way, Raghu, can you lend me a hundred rupees? I need it urgently, just now. I shall return it to you soon," said Harish.

"Well, I can give you the



money, but I never lend money to anybody without keeping some security," said Raghu.

"If that is a matter of principle with you, I should not ask you to violate it. You know, this bale of cloth cost me a hundred rupees. If you keep this as security, I shall be happy."

"Oh yes, this should be good enough." Raghu gave a hundred rupees to Harish and took the bale.

They had to cross a river. Plodding through it was difficult, but they had to do it.

Soon after they reached the other bank, Harish said,

"Raghu, here is your hundred rupees. Now, give me back the security." He handed the money back and took over his bale.

"Harish, what purpose did the loan serve?" asked Raghu surprised.

"It did serve an excellent purpose. I was afraid of losing balance and dropping the bale in the river. With your strength it was easy for you to carry it safe," explained Harish.

Raghu realised that he was strong, but the one who could make use of his strength was certainly superior to him!





THE JESTER'S ARITHMETIC

King Kanakaditya of Kanchangiri opened a new department. This department was to work for the kingdom's development. It was to see how more lands can be irrigated, how flood can be checked, how grain can be preserved for time of need, so on and so forth.

The king looked for an able officer to take charge of the department. Of all his employees, Madhav, Mohan and Murari appeared to be most capable officers. So that the work can go on at great speed, he placed all the three officers in charge of the department. The three young men were happy with their new responsibility.

The king of Mahendrapuri, the neighbouring kingdom, came to know about the new steps taken by King Kanakaditya. He too opened a similar

department for the development of his kingdom and put one of his able officers in its charge.

A year passed. To his surprise, King Kanakaditya found that the progress of Mahendrapuri had been far greater than that of his own kingdom. He became pensive.

"What makes you so thoughtful, my lord?" asked his court-jester.

"I feel sad to see that my three officers are not equal to one officer of Mahendrapuri."

"I beg to correct you, my lord, if you pardon me my audacity. Each of our three officers has twice the capacity of any single officer of Mahendrapuri. Any two of our officers will equal any one of them. Three of our officers together will equal half of any one of



them," said the jester.

The king looked amused. "My dear chap!" he then said, "I had never had much faith in your arithmetic. But I did not know that you were such a fool. If one of our officers equals two of theirs, how can two equal one of them and three equal only half?"

"My lord, I'm quite sure of my arithmetic. The situation is like this: If you vest the responsibility of a department in three officers, each will go his own way. One will cancel the plan of the second. The third will sometimes support one and sometimes the other. Out of the chaos only half of a single officer's work can be expected. If

you vest the responsibility in two, then sometimes through mutual agreement and sometimes through compromise they will achieve the result equal to a single officer's effort. If you put the responsibility on only one, I am sure, with his integrity, he will do twice of what any one officer of Mahendrapuri can do," explained the jester.

The king kept quiet for some time. "We'll give your suggestion a trial," he then said.

Six months later a beaming king patted the jester on the back and said, "Your arithmetic triumphs. But I should call this psychology more than arithmetic."

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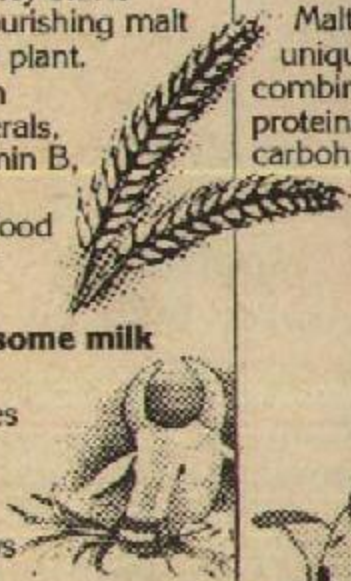
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